

REMARKS:

- 1) Referring to section 3 on page 2 of the Office Action, Applicant respectfully traverses the withdrawal of claims 26, 27 and 29 to 41 from consideration because even currently amended claim 22 is still generic to all claims 23 and 41 in this application. Claim 22 comprises proper antecedent language for all dependent claims 23 to 41. Claim 22 as currently amended is readable on all species disclosed in this application. Also claim 22 as currently amended is considered to be allowable over the prior art for the following reasons.
- 2) Claims 26 and 27 are clearly readable on Fig. 3 in which the spacer's top and bottom surfaces form the first pair of surfaces and wherein the front and back end surfaces form the second pair of spacer surfaces, for example. The end surface forming the second pair are only "substantially" rectangular because these surfaces have contoured ends clearly visible in Fig. 3 (at C1).
- 3) Examination of all claims 22 to 41 is respectfully requested.
- 4) The Examiner's suggestions to formally amend certain claims have received careful attention when revising the above claims. These suggestions are appreciated and have been incorporated into the above claims. Claim 42 has been added based on the present specification, page 8, line 5 where it is originally disclosed that the guard hoses (1, 2) and the spacers (5) are made of polytetrafluoroethylene, which is a flexible material.

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- 5) The rejection of claims 22, 23, 24, 25 and 28 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) in view of Parker taken in the light of the disclosure of Koziol is respectfully traversed for the following reasons. Currently amended claim 22 includes the features of claim 28 except the tongue and groove connection. Further, the guard hoses are defined as being flexible. This feature permits the installation of the present guard hose arrangement in an aircraft body in conformance with the aircraft body contour and in accordance with the physical installation conditions within the aircraft. Stiff conduits as disclosed by Parker cannot be installed in an aircraft due to space and weight considerations.
- 6) Parker's "Multiple Conduit" cannot be installed in an aircraft for still further reasons: fiber tubes immersed in molten pitch (col. 1, lines 40 to 50 of Parker) when dried are not flexible, not to mention the weight, particularly when several conduits are strapped together by a steel tie strap (20) (Fig. 2) or even strapped together by a tie in a box (Fig. 5). Since Parker already discloses a tie strap (20, 21), the second reference Koziol does not add anything to the disclosure of Parker, except that Koziol's "cable connectors" (15b) may be flexible. The invention does not use any "cable connectors" nor any tie straps.
- 7) Koziol shows conventional cable connector straps (15a) for securing cables to a special base plate (3). The base plate (3) is not flexible. Thus, using the straps of Koziol in the system of Parker or vice versa would not provide any suggestion toward

the claimed invention, particularly since the invention does not require any straps due to the direct connection or bonding formed between the flexible guard hoses and the spacer as now claimed in main claim 22 based on claim 28 (original claims 20 and 21).

- 8) Even if Parker is modified by using Koziol's lighter cable connectors (15a) instead of Parker's steel straps (20) there would be no suggestion toward the invention as claimed, because, the invention intentionally avoids using any kind of straps, stiff or flexible, thereby reducing the total weight of the structure.
- 9) It is emphasized on page 4 of the Office Action that Koziol uses flexible material, at least for the straps. While that is true, it does not teach, much less suggest, to combine a spacer with two flexible guard hoses and connect them directly to each other without any straps. The plate (3) of Koziol is made of plastic material (e.g. polyether ether ketone) that is reinforced by glass fibers. The plate 3 is then adhesively secured to a support. It is respectfully submitted that such a structure is not flexible and hence does not make any suggestions toward the invention. It is not critical that flexible materials are known as such. Flexible cable connectors as used by Koziol are not used by the invention. It is, however, critical what components need to be flexible for a very specific purpose namely installation in an aircraft.

- 10) Neither Parker nor Koziol suggest that there would be any benefit in combining the two references. More specifically, neither Parker nor Koziol suggest the direct connection between flexible guard hoses and a spacer thereby necessarily avoiding any straps. Parker's stiff conduits (not flexible hoses) cannot be installed in an aircraft for weight reasons alone. Koziol's structure is not suitable for Parker's purposes because Koziol's support plate (3) is not even needed by Parker, please see Fig.2 of Parker. More important, Parker wants to pour concrete onto his conduits (page 1, line 18) so that the conduits are fully embedded in concrete. Flexible conduits are not suitable for this purpose because the flexible conduits would be deformed by the concrete mix as it is being poured.

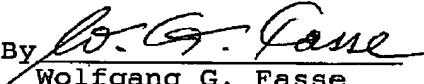
- 11) With regard to claim 23, Parker discloses spacers (12) which are not directly secured to the conduits (not flexible hoses). Parker clearly teaches that the spacer blocks (12) are connected to sectors (11) through pins 16 and/or tongue and groove connections. More specifically, the spacers (12) of Parker do not have any contours adapted to the contours of the conduits. Reading such features into the Parker disclosure is improper because it is hindsight.

- 12) Similar considerations apply to the rejection of claim 24. Parker's sectors (11) are cut from a short length of oversized conduit (page 2, line 57 to 61) and are then secured to the spacer block (12). Without strapping these conduits together as taught by Parker (at 20), elements 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 of Parker could not hold the conduits (10) together. Hence, there is no suggestion to directly connect a contoured spacer between two flexible guard hoses.
- 13) With regard to claim 25, no independent protection is intended for concave and/or convex contours as such.
- 14) As mentioned above, the features of claim 28, except for the tongue and groove connection, have been combined with claim 22. Claim 28 has been cancelled. Neither Parker nor Koziol teach, much less suggest, the direct connection between the spacer contours and the flexible hose contours.
- 15) Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application, including all present claims 22 to 27 and 29 to 42 are respectfully requested.

16) The Examiner is respectfully requested to check mark the relevant box for item 10 on PTOL-Form-326. Are the originally filed drawings acceptable or not?

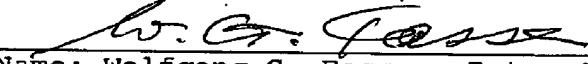
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